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THE
S P E E C H
OF
LORD GRENVILLE,

ON THE
MARQUIS WELLESLEY'S MOTION

IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS,
ON FRIDAY, THE 9th OF APRIL, 1813,

FOR THE
PRODUCTION OF CERTAIN PAPERS
ON
INDIAN AFFAIRS.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR JAMES RIDGWAY, PICCADILLY,

By Charles Wood, Poppin's Court, Fleet Street.

THE
SPEECH
OF
LORD GRENVILLE

MARQUESS WELLINGTON'S MOTION

ON

IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS

ON FRIDAY THE 20TH OF APRIL 1812

FOR THE

PRODUCTION OF CERTAIN PAPERS

ON

INDIAN AFFAIRS.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR JAMES BURGESS, PICCADILLY.

By Order of the House of Commons.

ADVERTISEMENT.

IN the endeavour to commit to paper from recollection, and at some distance of time, the substance of the following Speech, it is probable that not only the turn of the expressions, but also, in some instances, the arrangement of the topics may have been varied: and one or two points have been introduced, which were adverted to, not in that Debate, but in the preceding discussions connected with the same subject. But there is no deviation from the general course of argument and opinion pursued on those occasions.

Camelford House,
25th June, 1813.

ADVERTISEMENT.

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Cambridge House,
22d June, 1793.

THE
SPEECH
OF
LORD GRENVILLE,
&c. &c.

MY LORDS,

WHATEVER differences of opinion may ultimately be found among us relative to this great question of Indian Government and Commerce, we must all feel ourselves indebted to my noble friend * for the opportunity which he has afforded us of discussing it in this stage of the business, when discussion may be truly useful, instead of postponing our deliberation, as commonly happens, till the very moment of final decision. We have also great obligations to him for the lights which he has thrown on every part of the question. No man is better qualified to do so, not only by his brilliant eloquence, and extensive information, but also by personal experience, and peculiar local knowledge, the results of the distinguished part which

* Marquis Wellesley.

he has borne in the government of British India. I ought therefore to distrust my own judgment when I profess myself not wholly satisfied either by his reasoning, or, on the other hand, by the conclusions with which my noble friend who followed him * has supported the resolutions now on your table. My attachment, however, to those principles of public policy, on which my doubts in this case are founded, and my solicitude to contribute all that is in my power to the right decision of this great question, induce me to offer to your lordships such suggestions upon it as have presented themselves to my mind. I do so with no other predilection, but for the cause of truth, with no other desire, but that my own individual conduct, and, what is much more important, the ultimate decision of parliament, may be such as shall best promote the great interests now exclusively committed to our charge.

For the noble earl to whom I last alluded has, in my judgment, with great propriety pointed out the real nature of the duty which is now cast upon us. He has reminded us (I think it has been frequently overlooked in discussing the subject elsewhere) that our present deliberation embraces the whole question of our future relations with India : the government of a vast empire, and the regulation of the British commerce with every port and country between the

* Earl of Buckinghamshire.

southern promontories of Africa and America. It is a deception to speak of any existing rights, by which this immense and momentous consideration can now be circumscribed. The Charter of the East India Company was granted only for a limited period ; for limited periods it has ever since been renewed, with the express purpose, that at their expiration the matter should revert entire to the free disposition and deliberative wisdom of parliament. The trusts and duties of that great Corporation, its commercial and its political monopolies, will all expire together, on the lapse of the term for which they were created. All public right, all public interest in the subject will thenceforth devolve on the British legislature, exercising an unrestrained but sound discretion ; bound by no previous grant, fettered by no existing law, and having regard only to the principles of moral duty, and to the rules of a wise policy and enlightened government.

On precedents we can here have no reliance. The situation is new ; the subject on which we are to legislate knows no example. Our former measures would be deceitful guides. They were experiments not always successful, and at the best calculated only for limited duration ; never permanent, nor ever meant for permanence ; temporary in their nature, and continually varying with the progressive variations of our interest and power in a country, where our situation has never yet been stationary. To the

extent, and to the condition of our present Asiatic empire, they appear to me utterly inapplicable. And so far from wishing with my noble friend * (who opened this discussion) to perpetuate those anomalous and imperfect arrangements, I am persuaded that we are not yet arrived at the period when any final regulation on the subject can safely be established. Whatever we may now do, I deprecate the idea of placing it out of the reach of revisal. I object even to that part of the resolutions on your table, which would establish them, by an irrevocable compact, unchangeable for twenty years. Twenty years would at any time be much too long a period for farming out the commerce of half the globe, and the sovereignty of sixty millions of men. Those who advised the last renewal of the Charter had ample reason, during its continuance, to regret that they had placed out of the hands of parliament so considerable a portion of the national interests. How much more inexcusable would such an error now appear, when the events, not of the next twenty years, but of the next twenty months, may be decisive of the whole fate and fortunes of the British empire? This improvidence, I trust, we shall avoid. Whatever plan we now adopt, all men must surely admit the necessity of limiting it to the return of peace, to be then reconsidered with reference to the final arrangements both in

* Marquis Wellesley.

India and in Europe, of that important and decisive æra.

With respect to our present measure, temporary as I think it ought to be, permit me to observe, that both the resolutions proposed by the king's ministers, and the speech of my noble friend, able and eloquent as it was, appear to me, I speak it with deference, to labour under one fundamental and radical defect. They have both, I think, treated as principal, what is in its nature subordinate ; both considered as secondary, what is in truth the primary and paramount object for the consideration of parliament. The plan which is on our table, sets out with a pledge for the maintenance of the East India Company, as a fit instrument for administering the commerce and government of India ; and the very first resolution continues to this exclusive Corporation, in one sweeping grant, and by the most comprehensive words of reference, all the privileges and all the powers which it before enjoyed, and which are not specially enumerated in the succeeding exceptions. This seems to be regarded as the leading question which we are first to decide. All other matters are left for subsequent consideration. To the same point also my noble friend's arguments were all directed ; and every part of the extensive information which he gave us on the subject of our Indian interests, was stated always with reference to the renewal or discontinuance of the Company's authority. To me it appears, that we should first determine the character of the

duty which we undertake, and the general objects which we seek to attain ; and that having established these, we shall then more properly enquire by what course of conduct such purposes should be pursued, and by what instruments they may be best accomplished. This remark, if it applied only to the form in which the subject is brought before us, or to the logical arrangement of the discussion, would be a minute criticism, unworthy both of the place and the occasion. But it affects, in truth, the very essence of this proceeding. If the interests of the East India Company, its privileges, and its monopolies, are really the first objects of our care, the primary concern in this deliberation, let that principle govern our resolutions. But if there is a preferable and higher duty, which we must first discharge, let us also first acknowledge and declare it ; disguising neither from ourselves nor from the world the principles in which it originates, and the nature of the obligations which it imposes.

Consider, then, the relation in which we stand to India. The British nation is now sovereign in that country. To the imperial crown of this united kingdom, whatever we there possess of interest, territory, or dominion, is of right annexed. To argue the fact of the British sovereignty in India would be an insult on the understanding of my hearers. To ask whether any territory, dominion, or political authority, in any quarter of the globe, can be conquered by British arms, or acquired by British negotiators,

otherwise than to the British crown, is simply to ask whether we live under a monarchy or a republic. Our government knows no regal power but in the king; in him, alone, all sovereignty is vested—with him it indefeasibly resides; to be exercised not by his individual and personal discretion, as in despotic monarchies, but under the sanction and limit of the laws, through the channels of his regular government, and with the advice and consent of his necessary and constitutional councils. It is from this principle alone that we ourselves derive any authority to make laws for India. No territories to which the king's sovereignty did not extend, could, by any possible pretence, be subjected to the legislative authority of his parliament.

If this principle be too clear for argument, let us not therefore think that its assertion is indifferent: it is, on the contrary, a point of the highest and most pressing importance. A manly and distinct avowal of the sovereignty of the British crown in India is the only sure foundation on which our government can stand—the only solid principle on which we can either discharge our duties or maintain our rights. Much evil has already arisen from the neglect of this essential measure; much evil to the natives of India, still more to the British interests in that country. Governments of mixed and ambiguous origin—executive and judicial functions, flowing from different sources—military and civil powers not subjected to the same controul—and

armies joined in the same service, but recognizing distinct command—have already too much distracted our Indian empire: they have repeatedly led to confusion and civil discord; they have broken out (I grieve to say it) into military resistance and bloodshed; and if I am not greatly deceived, their continuance menaces the existence of our empire with dangers yet more formidable.

Nor is it only in this view, important as it must appear to every reflecting mind, that the public assertion of the sovereignty of the British crown in India has become a measure of urgent necessity. There is no other possible remedy against the dangers which my noble friend has pictured, not more forcibly than justly, as resulting from the unexplained situation of your government in that quarter of the globe, with respect to the other nations of Europe. We are exhorted by the advocates of the East India Company to guard against the indiscriminate intercourse of Englishmen with India; and some persons have even considered this danger alone as a sufficient motive for excluding the subjects of the British crown from the commerce of half the world. Yet the misconduct of our own people within our own dominions we may controul, as we have hitherto controuled it. But will foreign nations acknowledge the same restraints? Will they submit themselves to a similar exclusion at the will of a trading company, claiming despotic power over that vast empire, not as the delegates

of their own king, but as the pretended ministers of a deposed Mogul—a feigned authority, derived from an extinct dominion? You know by experience that they will not. The peace of Amiens left this matter unexplained. I urged the danger then, with all the earnestness which it is so truly calculated to inspire. But my representations of it were light and feeble in comparison with those of your government in Bengal. The alarm there was instantaneous, the mischief imminent. And had not the war been first rekindled by European interests, the claims and views of France in India, the lofty pretensions which she derived from her former transactions, both with the native and the British governments, and the determined purpose which she already manifested of re-establishing in that country a political and military power to the subversion of your own, must in six months have involved us in renewed hostilities.

What, then, must we now do to avert this evil?—Our course is plain. The British crown is *de facto* sovereign in India. How it became so, it is needless to enquire. This sovereignty cannot now be renounced without still greater evils both to that country and to this, than even the acquisition of power has ever yet produced. It must be maintained. Let it, therefore, be found, whenever we shall treat for peace, not tacitly existing, but openly assumed, and unambiguously established: it will then rest, at least, on the same foundation with all the other *de facto* go-

vernments created by this great convulsion of the world. But if we now omit to declare our right, we must then negotiate for it; or if this also be neglected, we must prepare to meet the evils which recent experience has taught us to anticipate.

In the mean time, that sovereignty which we hesitate to assert, necessity compels us to exercise. Parliament, in the discharge of its highest functions, must now once more give laws to India; pronouncing not on any single and separate question of general or local regulation, but on the whole principle and frame of government under which the British dominion in that country shall henceforth be administered. Such is the task which the awful revolutions of empire in Asia have now cast upon the British nation. What, let me once more ask you, are the duties which it imposes; and what the order in which they should be discharged? The very reverse of that in which, I am sorry to say it, they have hitherto been most commonly regarded.

Must we not, in the first instance, consult the welfare of the country for which we undertake to legislate? Are we not bound, above all other considerations, to provide for the moral improvement of its people, and for their social happiness; for the security of their property and personal freedom; for the undisturbed enjoyment of the fruits of their industry; for the protection and extension of their agriculture,

manufactures, and commerce; the peace and good order of their provinces; and the impartial administration of their laws? These are duties which attach on government in all its forms; the price and the condition of obedience; sacred obligations from which no sovereign power can ever be released, due from all who exact, to all who pay allegiance.

Next to these objects, but far below them in the scale of moral duty, is the attention which we must also pay to the interests of our own country, deeply implicated in this discussion. Nor let us hastily suppose that these duties, however apparently distinct, are really at variance with each other. Far from it.—Pursued with sincerity, and on the principles of a just and liberal policy, there exists between them a close connection, a necessary and mutual dependence. The attachment of conquered provinces can be secured only by good government: the resources which they can furnish to the metropolis must be proportioned to the prosperity which they themselves enjoy.

How then shall we best discharge these mixed and concurrent obligations? What system of British government in India shall carry to its highest pitch of attainable advantage our connection with those vast dominions? In what manner shall it enrich the metropolis without impoverishing the province, render the increase of our own commerce an extension, not a transfer of theirs, and draw from them, without injury to their prosperity, a just proportion of re-

venue, not as a tribute wrung from misery, but as the willing retribution of gratitude, for protection and good government, enjoyed in substance and not in name? By what laws, what judicatures, what responsibility, shall we prevent the oppression of distant subjects, submissive to all power, and incapable, in the present state of their manners, habits, and opinions, utterly incapable, of political freedom? How reconcile with their progressive improvement, with the gradual diffusion of light and knowledge, the deference due to their subsisting institutions? How shall we teach them to bless the hour which subjected them to the British crown, to venerate as the source of all their happiness the dominion of a nation just, because it is free, careful of the rights of others in proportion as it is jealous of its own, and displaying the pre-eminence of superior knowledge in its best and noblest form, the dignity of superior virtue?

For the accomplishment of all these just and honourable purposes, my noble friend is, I am sure, not less solicitous than myself. Nor would the magnitude of the duty deter him from its discharge. The labour of research, the difficulty of deliberation, the hazard of decision, I know he would not shun. But he hopes to supersede them all by a compendious and summary proceeding. All, and more than all that we seek to accomplish may, he thinks, be found in a measure simple indeed in its proposal, and easy of execution, were it but equally

beneficial in its result. It is his opinion, that we should re-establish the now expiring system under which these great interests have lately been administered. He desires us to revest in the East India Company, by a fresh legislative grant, all its former monopolies, both commercial and political; varied indeed in some inconsiderable particulars, but retaining unaltered all the prominent and characteristic features. The whole operation of this system he thinks so great a practical good, that all other considerations must be sacrificed to its continuance.

To this proposal the king's ministers do not accede. They are justly desirous to open a free competition in the trade of India. They recognize the irresistible claim of all the subjects of this empire to participate in the commerce of every part of its dominions. They are well apprized, that to deprive India of the resources of foreign trade, would be to violate our first duties towards that country, and to cut off one of the few remaining sources of its prosperity; and they think with reason that it would be an indignity as well as an injury to the British merchants and manufacturers to exclude them from advantages to which we invite all other nations. The monopoly of the China trade they would however, with my noble friend, regrant to the Company; its political functions they would re-establish entire and unimpaired; and they would preserve, if possible, that complicated system under which it exercises its joint, but as I fear,

irreconcilable characters of sovereign and merchant. I speak of their plan as I collect it from these resolutions, laid upon our table without any comment. I trust that I cannot have mistaken its leading outlines, but I sincerely regret that they have not themselves done more justice to it by explaining to your lordships the principles on which it is grounded, and the general views which they have taken of this extensive question.

Such then are the two proposals hitherto submitted to our consideration. And I am compelled to acknowledge, that as far as I am yet informed, they both of them appear to me highly questionable. That of my noble friend rests, as I think, on a policy directly adverse to all the best established principles of legislation and government. That of the noble lords opposite to me is, I fear, irreconcilably at variance with itself. I cannot encourage myself to hope that such a competition as they propose can really so subsist as to deserve the character of a free trade, or to ensure its advantages; a competition where the whole government, and territory, and revenues of India will be thrown into one scale, and in the other nothing but the unprotected enterprize of individual adventurers. To the fullest admission of British skill and capital into the trade of India, I readily assent; I desire it for the interests of that country, yet more than for our own. I applaud the principle, I rejoice in the attempt; we owe it to our own

people, we owe it to the natives of our Indian provinces; and every measure which I can persuade myself is really calculated to give effect to it, possesses a strong recommendation, an irresistible claim to my support. In the attainment of this great object, it is my earnest wish to give to the king's ministers all possible assistance which it can be in my power to afford them. Nor do the difficulties of which I am apprehensive, belong to this branch of their proposal; they are superadded to it by the other resolutions with which it is combined.

On this last point indeed I am supported even by the authority of my noble friend who originated this debate. There is in this respect a perfect agreement between us. He thinks with me, that the option must be made between the free and the exclusive system. The advantages of both cannot be combined. The complicated powers of government and trade now vested in the Company are, as I fear, more than sufficient to enable it at its pleasure to overwhelm all private enterprize. The free competition of British merchants in the trade of India, if it could really be established, would, by a necessity equally inevitable, as he thinks, incapacitate them from the discharge of those political functions which this plan endeavours to continue to them. Such also appears to be the opinion of the Company itself. Nor can I differ from them. If then we have really decided, in the very outset of these enquiries, to reestablish the

present frame of Indian government, as already producing all practicable and attainable good, we must make with resolution the sacrifices which it unavoidably requires. But if your lordships should judge that the auspicious moment is arrived for improving all our relations with India, to the unspeakable benefit of that country, and to our own inestimable profit, you will then undoubtedly regard the liberation of British commerce as no inconsiderable feature among the advantages of such a change.

I have already said, that I wish not to pronounce definitively on any part of this extensive subject. This discussion is preliminary in its nature; I state my thoughts for enquiry and deliberation, not to convince others, but to receive information for my own guidance. But the strong impression of my mind is, that after having first asserted the sovereignty of the crown over India, our next step should be this — to separate its government from all intermixture with mercantile interests, or mercantile transactions.

The very existence of this blended character of merchant and sovereign, on which our whole Indian system is now built up, appears to me an anomaly inconsistent with all true principles of government, reprobated by all authority, and condemned by all experience. No sovereign, I confidently believe, has ever yet traded to profit; no trading company, I greatly fear, has ever yet administered government for the happiness of its subjects.

But all theory and speculation in this case my noble friend decidedly rejects. He will not consent to try it by any general principles. There is something so singular in the present question, as to put it beyond the reach of all the ordinary rules of political wisdom. To what then would he resort? To partial views, to temporary expedients, to that wretched policy which knows no rule of government but the supposed convenience of the moment? Very different, I am certain, are his sentiments. He knows, no man better, that it is in general conclusions, collected by experience and methodized by reason, that all science invariably consists, and most especially that science which has for its object the happiness of nations. He knows that in all public councils these digested and embodied maxims are the true guides and luminaries by which our course is to be steered; that this accumulated treasure of political wisdom is the great storehouse of the knowledge of a statesman, from which all his practical decisions must ever be supplied. Its application indeed may be erroneous, as in what human science may not just principles be misdirected? But shall we therefore tread back our steps in knowledge, close our eyes against the lights we have acquired, and exclude from political deliberation all the established principles and all the elementary rules of government? Better would it be at once to renounce all use of reason, to submit to blind chance ourselves, our actions, and our fortunes,

and with the functions of legislation to disclaim also its character and its authority.

But in this case we cannot err. Our conclusions are here supported, not by speculation only, but also by experience: the experience not of parallel cases, but of the very circumstance to which we apply it. Never before were the unerring maxims of political œconomy so fully illustrated, as in the history of the British East India Company.

That great Corporation has now for near fifty years exercised dominion in India: over countries whose commerce enriched their predecessors, as it before enriched so many other European nations. They possess there all the power and all the instruments of sovereignty; governments and councils, fleets and armies, allies and subject-princes: they have an immense territory, royal tributes, an imperial revenue. But have they a profitable commerce? My noble friend* who presides over that department has anticipated the question; has more than answered the enquiry. He has told us, and I believe his assertion is much within the truth, he has told us, that since the last renewal of their charter they have lost on this trade above four millions sterling. Four millions sterling! in trading with one of the richest countries of the East; a country whose government they administer, and whose commerce they monopolize! and if, at this

* Earl of Buckinghamshire.

hour, they do in fact realize a profit on any part of their vast concerns, where only is that profit found? Not on their export trade from England; that trade is a monopoly, and on that it is their boast to lose. Not on their import trade from India, where they exercise unrestricted power; that trade my noble friend has characterised, and the impression of his statement will not, I am sure, be speedily effaced from our remembrance. In China, alone, they trade to profit. In China, where they have no sovereignty, no monopoly, no preference of trade, where they have not even the common benefit of free access. In China, where they are banished, like outcasts, to a remote and narrow corner of the empire, there to reside under a perpetual quarantine!

But it is not for commerce that my noble friend* would re-establish these commercial monopolies. With the nature of commerce he is too well acquainted: his object is political. He thinks, extraordinary as it must appear, that this trading Company is the only instrument through which the king and parliament of Great Britain can safely administer their Indian empire! and if he urges us once more to shut out our merchants and manufactures from their best hopes of new and successful enterprize, to close against them all India, all China, the Indian seas, the Eastern seas, the Pacific Ocean, and the whole western side of the great continent of America,

* Marquis Wellesley.

extending from the Northern almost to the Southern Pole ; it is not because their competition would ruin the commerce of the Company, but because it would embarrass its government. So mixed, so blended, so inseparably embodied, he assures us, are the jarring and incompatible functions of this anomalous institution ! So strange is the necessity of this unprecedented case, that we must carry on our commerce at a loss, in order to govern our empire to advantage !

He compels me then to ask, what is in truth this practical and experienced good to which all speculative wisdom must give way ? And he answers me by an eloquent and splendid enumeration of political benefits conferred, during the last thirty years, upon the natives of our Indian provinces. Their general situation improved, their interests consulted, their wealth advanced, their coasting trade encouraged, their landed property made permanent, and their criminal and civil justice administered on principles more pure and upright, than ever yet were witnessed in Asiatic judicatures. I heard him with delight. My heart warmed at the recital. Not merely because the person making it had himself borne no small part in the execution and extension of these noble works ; not merely because I also had the happiness to concur, both in their preparation and final establishment, with men of far more talent and authority than myself. No, my lords, my feelings were not personal. Higher

and better were the emotions of my mind when I looked back to the real source in which these inestimable blessings had originated. I called to my remembrance the wisdom and justice of parliament, the public councils, and the public virtues of my country, which had extended themselves to the remotest regions of the East, and erected there to the British character a monument of imperishable splendour.

But the East India Company! Are we to give power to *them*, because India has been well governed? Are we to bind our trade in fetters that *they* may exercise political authority? I have no wish, I can have no motive, to speak injuriously of any men; neither of bodies nor of individuals. But I appeal to the fact. For near twenty years after the acquisition of the Dewannee, the East India Company did really administer the political government of India.—During that period, scarce five years, scarce three years can be found, in which the inherent vices of that form of administration, and the consequent oppression and misery of its subject provinces, did not forcibly compel the interposition of parliament. It would betray the profoundest ignorance of men and governments, to suppose that this necessity, so long subsisting, so constantly recurring, could originate in the uniform misconduct of individuals. The directors, the governors, and the servants of the Company, in the course of that long period, were necessarily men of various character; but the system itself

was radically vicious, which vested the government of an empire in bodies utterly unfit to exercise any political authority. I say this, not merely on my own conviction; it is the recorded judgment, the unanimous opinion of parliament, formed upon long investigation, minute enquiry, and mature reflection. When I first entered into public life, party violence raged with unusual fury, and the course of events directed it peculiarly to this question. It was on this very ground that the government of the empire was disputed between the greatest statesmen of our age. Yet in one sentiment all men were even then unanimous. No one doubted, and after the experience of twenty years, no one could doubt, that the political direction of India must be transferred from the East India Company, and placed under the complete controul of the public councils.

Accordingly the law which passed in 1784, the source of all these benefits, the very line of demarcation, from which commences the good government of India, did actually commit this whole authority to commissioners appointed by the crown. In the public board, so constituted by the wise and necessary interposition of parliament, and continued, with slight variations, by succeeding acts, has ever since resided, a complete and effective superintendence over every part of the political affairs of India. That government has still been exercised, indeed, in the name of the Company, as the Company also has

used the name of the Asiatic powers, whose misrule it superseded; but both the controul and the responsibility of all political measures, are vested by law in the public servants of the state. The commerce and the patronage of the Company are alone excepted; points of which I shall presently speak; but on all other matters which any way concern the public interests in India, it is the office and the duty of the king's commissioners, at their discretion, to exercise a complete and unqualified political controul. It is their function to erase, to add, to alter, and, in the default of the directors, to originate those instructions, which, by law, the public servants in India are bound implicitly to obey.

If, therefore, praise be justly due, as I trust it is, to those who, for the last thirty years, have administered these high interests, to the servants of the state, both here and in India, that praise is due, and most especially due, to one individual, a noble viscount*, of whose memory no man, in treating of any Indian question, can justly speak, but with sincere and merited respect.

What a delusion would it then be, to relinquish any just hopes of extending the commerce of our country, from the fear of embarrassing the Company's political functions! If you really wish that body to reassume the political government of India, you must not continue, but repeal the present laws; you must replace them, not by the

* Lord Melville.

successive improvement of new provisions, in principle still more liberal, in operation still more beneficial, but by a recurrence to exploded errors, by the re-establishment of that fruitful source of all the former evil, by the re-enactment of that ruinous and oppressive system, which, thirty years ago, was unanimously annulled by parliament.

The Company's commercial concerns, it is true, do not fall under the superintendence of the king's commissioners; in the loss or profit which have accrued on these, in their prosperous or adverse issue, the Board of Controul has had no participation. And it is singular that my noble friend, who is desirous of maintaining, as he expresses it, to the Company, those functions of which they have long been substantially divested, would, at the same time, by a new interference with their authority, extend the controul of the king's government to the only branch of their affairs, of which they have hitherto retained the exclusive direction. I always feel pain in differing from him on any subject, and most of all on this, where I should so much more willingly defer to his authority. But, for my own part, I object as much to limit the power of a trading corporation in the conduct of its own concerns, as to extend it to political matters to which it is incompetent. I see as little reason for placing the Company's commerce under the management of ministers, as for vesting in its directors the government of an empire. From this union of merchant and sove-

reign, in any form, my judgment revolts; they are characters every where incompatible; in a cabinet as much as in a trading company; as repugnant to each other at Whitehall as experience has proved them to be in Leadenhall-street and at Calcutta.

Great stress is laid, however, on the subject of patronage, and with great reason. I have never altered the opinion which I entertained in 1784, that, if the influence which then belonged to the East India Company were vested in the crown, or in any political party, it must weigh down the balance of our government. Much more is this my opinion now, when the patronage, both foreign and domestic, of that mighty Corporation, has been unmeasurably increased. But is there no other course? Is it self-evident, that, because we fear to give this vast influence to a party, we must therefore vest it in an exclusive corporation? Is it so manifestly desirable to raise up within our own government, and in the very heart of its metropolis, another government of more extended influence? Has the East India Company itself been always found quite disconnected with the political divisions of the state? or is it absolutely certain, that in their hands, the patronage of India can never be abused? Parliament, at least, has decided otherwise. By the act of 1784, the whole commercial patronage did indeed remain with the directors; and with them, large as it is, it must undoubtedly be left. It is by far the most con-

siderable source of that great political influence which the Company does now actually exercise in this country; and its abuse, for who will deny that abuse there is, would in no way be so well controuled as by the competition of a free trade. But on the exercise of the political patronage, provident and effective limitations are already imposed by law. And it is, as I think, one of the most important branches of our present deliberation, to examine the nature and effect of these; to ascertain whether they have, as I am inclined to hope, been on the whole sufficient for the attainment of their purpose? Whether they are not still susceptible of improvement in India? Whether they are fit to be extended to the other parts of our Eastern empire, to Ceylon, to the Isles of France, and to the Eastern Islands, where the establishments are as yet unregulated by law, and the patronage of the crown unlimited? And, most of all, to enquire whether it be true, as we are so frequently assured, that these securities against abuse are inseparably connected with the present form of government in India; or, whether they might not, as I confidently believe, be applied with equal, perhaps with greater efficacy, to the same service, administered under the constitutional authority of the crown.

Let us then examine the fact. It is well known how great the influence of the king's ministers already is in the appointment of those who are to exercise the supreme authorities in

India, whether civil or military. The reason of the case has here controuled the strict letter of the law. And it would, in my judgment, be far more constitutional, that the responsibility of the nomination should openly attach on those, who have in almost every instance for thirty years discharged the duty of selection. But with respect to the offices of inferior trust in India, including all below the councils, the general course of promotion there both in the civil and in the military line has rested, as I apprehend, where unquestionably it ought to rest, with the governments on the spot. They are best qualified to discriminate the characters of those who act under their inspection; they are most immediately concerned to reward the merit, to discountenance the misconduct of those who are to execute their orders. Such then, I trust and I believe, is now the established practice; and few who are conversant with the affairs of India will deny, that more inconvenience than advantage has already arisen, and is likely to arise in future, from an occasional interference with it, whether on the part of the crown, or on that of the East India directors. To your governments in India only can this authority be safely entrusted. But undoubtedly a power, in itself so considerable, and administered at so great a distance, cannot be, nor is it, left without limitation. The law has done much to remove the opportunity, and with it the temptation to abuse. By the Act of 1784, an invariable course of succession by se-

niority was established, both for the civil and the military service in India. By that of 1793 the strict letter of this rule was a little, and but a little, relaxed. Under that law, fixed classes and gradations of office have been established in India, of rank and value proportioned to the length of service by which alone any servants, even the most meritorious, can be qualified to hold them. Within these limits all exercise of patronage is restrained, and the effective operation of this principle has been considerably extended by a judicious but perhaps still imperfect separation of the lines of civil service. But by far the most important provision, without which no other could be effectual, is found in those clauses of the Act of 1784, which corrected the abuse of appointing to high stations in India persons new to that service. No office under the government of our Indian empire can now be conferred except upon its regular servants, sent out in early youth, and trained to superior trust by the correct discharge of subordinate employments. When your lordships consider, therefore, the jealousy with which the execution of all these regulations is watched by a whole body of public servants whose prospects depend on their observance; and when you further reflect that the persons from among whom alone the selection must in every case be made, are few in number, and that they have all originally been named in the outset of their life by various choice, unmixed with politics, and from dif-

ferent classes of society, it will no longer surprise us to be assured that the political divisions of the state have, under this system, found no admission into the exercise of Indian patronage.

But how can it possibly be shewn that these wise provisions of the law, this salutary course and gradation of public service, depend upon the East India Company's authority? The king's civil service in India, should such be its future appellation, would equally subsist under the same regulations, secured in the same prospects, animated to the same exertions, protected by the same just interposition of the law against the noxious influence of political intrigue, and deriving only fresh distinction to themselves, and fresh respect among the powers of India, from the stamp and sanction of royal authority.

To blend, indeed, as has been sometimes recommended, into one indiscriminate mass the general army of the crown and the local force of India, would be the inevitable ruin of the empire. I have no doubt of it. The military patronage of the crown, already so great, would then exceed all bounds; we should lose the inestimable advantages of local education, knowledge, and habits, so necessary for the command of native troops: and the unjust partialities, preferences, and supercessions to which the distant service would infallibly be exposed, must soon break down its military character: must, too, probably renew, I shudder to pronounce it, the criminal scenes, which we have so lately witnessed, of mutiny and public rebellion.

Very different is the system on which I am disposed to hope that this valuable army might be taken as a distinct force, under the king's immediate protection and command. Preserving to it all its local character, and local advantages; securing to it a complete parity of rank and promotion with the king's general army; and blending only the staff of both into one body of general officers, qualified by commission, as well as by merit and service, and called by habitual and indiscriminate appointment, to exercise command over British troops in every quarter of the world. These details however are not for this day's discussion. It is sufficient for our present purpose to remark, that the rules of gradation now actually existing in that service, and guaranteed to it by law, must be broken down, before it can become, in the hands of the Crown any more than in those of the Company, an object of political patronage. And if these rules are thought insufficient, let them be strengthened and enforced. The nature and composition of an Indian army, its duties, its rewards, and its prospects, will be found, by those who consider the question attentively, to admit and to require rules of succession much stricter than are consistent with the general principles of military advancement.

It remains, then, only to speak of the appointment of the youths by whom these services must be recruited; the *writers*, as they are called, and the *cadets*, who are to rise successively to the highest functions of civil and military trust.

They are now named by private patronage; nor would I ever consent to vest this influence in the king's ministers. Not merely because it is itself greatly too large to be so given without necessity, but much more because all possible security for the due exercise of patronage in India depends on the disconnection of the great body of the public servants there from the domestic parties in our state. But is it therefore necessary that these appointments should be made by the East India Company? Or does not the very same principle apply, though doubtless in a less degree, as an objection against their exercising such a trust? Can it be supposed that the controul over the conduct of these public servants will always be justly exercised by those with whom their appointment has originated? In whatever hands the government of India shall now be placed, it is just, it is necessary, to provide some new course of impartial, and what is not less important, of mixed selection, for keeping up your civil and military service in that country. Nor can the task be difficult. Innumerable are the modes in which it might be accomplished. The most obvious course would be, to choose the young men who are destined for the civil service by free competition and public examination from our great schools and universities: to name the cadets not by the choice of any man, but by some fixed course of succession from the families of officers who have fallen in the public service. In this manner would the patronage of India, instead of contributing to

political influence, or to private gratification, serve as a reward of merit, as an encouragement of valour, learning, and religion, and as an honourable discharge of public gratitude: and the persons destined hereafter to administer the government of millions would be those only who, even in their earliest youth, had afforded some promise of superior talent, diligence, and virtue.

On this branch of the subject your lordships will think that I have too long detained you. But it is only by such details that loose and general assertions can be brought to issue, that imaginary fears and groundless prejudices can be dispelled. It must I think be clear to every one, that the apprehensions entertained on this point are of that description. Your lordships may doubt, on other grounds, whether or not to separate the commerce from the government of India. This at least is certain, that their union contributes nothing to the security of the British constitution.

But is it compatible with the prosperity and good government of your Indian provinces, or with that free competition in their trade which our fellow subjects claim on grounds justly pronounced irresistible? For these are the questions which we are now to examine, and very closely are they connected with each other.

What is then the true nature of this union, so often described to us as indissoluble? What necessary, what real connection subsists between functions so different in their character and ob-

ject, and which in every other instance we always find so carefully discriminated? The commercial and political accounts of the Company have, indeed, long since been blended into one texture, so complicated in its fabric, so artificially and intricately interwoven, that, in their present form, the separation is perhaps impracticable. After long investigation, the committee of the House of Commons, whose Report is on your table, judged it impossible that they ever should be unravelled. And that Report accordingly has presented to our view not an *account* but an *estimate* of profit and loss on the commerce of the Company since the last renewal of the Charter. An estimate of the future is a thing familiar to all our minds, but an estimate of past transactions, an estimate of matters of account, an estimate of commercial dealings long since closed, has little to recommend it but its singularity. Let not however this remark be misunderstood as applied in any invidious sense. I have no such meaning; the fault is in the system, not in the individuals, who conduct it according to the forms which they have found established. But no real necessity can exist for their continuance. In whatever manner your lordships shall finally arrange the great outlines of Indian government, this confusion of account I have no doubt you will prevent in future. Should the resolutions now on our table be adopted, and much more should you agree with my noble friend's proposal, you will undoubtedly make it imperative on this great

trading Corporation to keep clear and distinct accounts of commercial loss and gain, unmixed with any other source of receipt or payment. This is expected from every just trader even in his own concerns ; it is the bounden duty of all who conduct commerce in trust for others.

But I have already said that in my view of the subject we are called upon to go much farther : to separate not merely the accounts, but the dealings ; and to discriminate the exchequer from the counting house in India, not on paper only, but in practice, and as widely as they always are discriminated in every other well ordered government. By one of the resolutions now upon your table it is directed in substance, that the public revenues of the state in India, after defraying the charges of government and interest of debt there, shall next be applied to the purchase of the Company's investment. And it is this appropriation of revenue to trade which forms, under the present circumstances, the principal link of connection between the Company's political and its commercial character. To its continuance therefore my noble friend, who wishes the permanence of the present system, naturally sees no objection ; but I must confess it is of all the provisions of the plan before us, that, to which I should with most difficulty assent. I know not how to reconcile it with either of the objects which we seek to accomplish ; it seems to me equally adverse to the good government and prosperity of our provinces, and to the

just claims of the British merchant to a free participation in their commerce. The limits of this discussion will not admit of my entering at large into this extensive question. Some other opportunity may possibly be afforded for its detailed examination. In such an enquiry it will be necessary to trace through all their different stages, the course and operation of an investment provided by issues from the public treasury in India, and sold to realize a remittance to the Company in Europe. One striking feature occurs in the very outset of the transaction. It is that to which my noble friend adverted as affording in his view a gratifying and satisfactory proof of the advantages resulting to your Indian subjects from a government which combines the functions of merchant and sovereign. He reminded us that for the very purpose of manufacturing the cloths of which the investment is afterwards to be composed, advances are in the first instance made to the weavers from the public treasuries in India. I own I was surprised to hear this practice relied on as beneficial to the country. It may have become necessary to the maintenance of this involved and complicated system. I do not deny it. But in that case how much must we abate of the confidence which we should all so gladly have reposed in the glowing representations of Indian prosperity! What, let me ask you, what is the real condition of an empire whose industry is supported only by advances made from its revenues? In countries impo-

verished and exhausted by a long course of public calamity, and in those where no commercial capital has ever yet grown up, commerce I am well aware is sometimes carried on solely by the credit and resources of the exporting merchant. And in those cases a gradual accession of wealth will, in the ordinary course of trade, accrue to the nation which thus attracts the capital of others ; and the very evil itself, such are the beneficent dispensations of Providence, will finally remedy the distress in which it had originated. But how widely different from this is the case where the capital which sets to work the industry of a people, is furnished only from the taxes which they pay : where the sovereign, himself the exporting merchant, sends out their manufacture without return ; himself the internal trader, purchases it only from their own resources ; himself the master manufacturer, maintains the artisan at the cost of the labourer, and claiming to be himself also the paramount proprietor of the soil, actually collects in kind the raw material in payment of his territorial revenue. By what part of such a trade can the country profit ? What freedom, what security, what competition can exist in commerce so conducted ? What health or vigour in the community which thus draws from its own veins the only nourishment by which the vital circulation is maintained ? We may hope indeed—I speak it not in flattery, but in the sincere conviction of my heart—that the spirit which pervades our

Indian service, the liberal and enlightened principles on which the public interests are there considered, and the anxious solicitude displayed on every occasion for the prosperity of the people whose government we administer, do afford in the execution of this system every possible alleviation which from its nature it is capable of receiving. Nor am I unapprized that under still greater discouragements than these, such is the elastic force of human industry, when secured in peace and protected by law, the population, the products, and the wealth of any country will increase: and most especially of one so highly favoured in soil and climate. But the system itself, unless I greatly misconceive it, is fruitful only in evil. It exhibits the hand of government not fostering the improvement of its people, but pressing on their industry in every stage, interfering with all their occupations, and meeting them in every market with the public purse. It raises and depresses arbitrarily the sale of their produce and manufactures, by transactions too large for counteraction, too uncertain for private speculation; founded on no just combination of mercantile adventure, but regulated solely by principles of political convenience, the state of the public treasury, and the estimated increase or diminution of the national expenditure.

I know indeed that a portion of the revenues of the state in India must be remitted to this country. Some contribution perhaps we may

hereafter expect from thence to the general expenses of the empire ; but for this I think we should not be impatient ; the prosperity of a dependent province we ought to value far beyond its tribute. Present provision must however be made for the interest and gradual reduction of political debts, contracted in that country, and transferred to England under the sanction of the king's commissioners, and the authority of parliament. We must also secure the due payment of allowances granted in retribution of public service, and the means of defraying regularly other charges of various descriptions which must be incurred at home for purposes of Indian government. These no doubt are obligations binding on the sovereign of India ; and my noble friend, while he attaches that character to the East India Company, is justly apprehensive of any competition which could interfere with their punctual discharge.

The speculations of private traders, he says, would anticipate the Company's sales, derange their estimated receipts, and expose their public credit to great hazard. I answer, that if the separation of government and commerce were duly made, this difficulty would cease at once. Against commercial disappointment, commercial prudence would provide, and no man would propose to burthen the Company with the expenses of Indian government, if they no longer disposed of its resources. But let us suppose the contrary decision taken. Let parliament

determine still to administer our Indian empire in the name of the Company, and under their ostensible authority. The case will then be different? Undoubtedly it will. To them, on their account, and to support their payments, these remittances must then be made. I admit it. For these purposes they will represent the government of India. But it will not follow of necessity that the remittances must even then be made through their investments. We may still ask, what would in truth be the most profitable mode of conducting these transactions? We may enquire on what ground it is thought advantageous that any government, be it the king's or the Company's, should issue money from the public treasury for the purchase of goods within its own dominions, to be resold on government account in the country to which its remittances are to be made? If I am not greatly deceived, this is a proceeding not less objectionable in India than in England. The principle of the transaction is not varied by its place. If the noble earl * opposite to me should this year be required to remit a subsidy to Hamburgh or to Stockholm, is this the course he will pursue? Will he send his agents into our ports and manufactories to purchase the sugar or the woollens in which the remittance will really be made? And will he then throw these articles in a mass into the foreign market, solicitous only to real-

* Earl of Liverpool.

ize the sum he wishes to obtain there, and comparatively indifferent to the profit or loss of the transaction? Undoubtedly not. He will contract as cheaply as he can, and probably by open competition, with merchants for their bills; through them his whole purpose will at once be accomplished; and with them it will remain to complete the transaction, in the successive operations of their own commerce, carefully adjusted by private interest to the perpetual fluctuations of demand. A similar course, it should seem, may with similar advantage be pursued in India. The treasury at Calcutta, may, like the treasury at Whitehall, disconnect itself wholly from the transactions of the counting house; this might be done with equal facility even though both should be continued under the same supreme direction. The Company's trade would then be conducted on true mercantile principles of profit and loss; and its government would, according to the same maxims of public œconomy which are pursued by other governments, make its remittances by fair competition on public tender, open to all alike, in India as in England, to the Company's commercial agents, or to the well accredited houses of private individuals.

No doubt such remittances, like any tributary payment made in whatever mode, must still in some degree be detrimental to the prosperity of India. It is a drain for which no return is made but in protection and good government. Yet

if conducted through the channel of an open trade, and limited most scrupulously in their amount by a due consideration of the condition of the country which supplies them, I see no reason to believe them inconsistent with its rapid and permanent improvement. This is the ordinary condition of a dependent and tributary province. What I object to is that peculiar course of policy which not only exacts the tribute, but monopolizes the commerce: compels the payment, and forestalls the resources which should provide it. And this too in a country where few and inconsiderable offices of civil trust, where no office of military trust, is as yet in the hands of the natives: where the fortunes realized by all who govern, and by almost all who trade, are at no distant period remitted also to the metropolis. It is indeed this last circumstance which is, in my judgment, by far the most alarming in the nature of our connection with India. How the pressure which this produces can ever be resisted is a fearful consideration.

What a powerful motive does it then suggest to us for throwing open the ports and markets of India to British capital and enterprize, for inviting to her harbours the ships and merchants of every quarter of the globe, and securing to her, as far as legislation can secure it, the fullest benefit of the most unqualified commercial freedom! If evil so extensive and alarming must unavoidably result to her from her subjection to a

distant sovereignty, let it at least be compensated by the unrestricted enjoyment of all her local advantages. The anxiety which I feel (I have already so stated it), is not for the transfer but for the extension of Indian commerce; not, as some have expressed it, to give to Englishmen the benefit of that trade which foreigners now enjoy, but to give to India the benefit both of British and of foreign trade. To administer those vast possessions on any principles of colonial monopoly would be impracticable if it were just, would be unjust if it were practicable. In a British House of Lords I trust we are not deliberating on the means of ruling sixty millions of men in sole subserviency to our own advantage; nor if this were our object, should I consider the establishment of such a system as in any manner calculated to promote it. But it is as much the moral duty of a British statesman to consult the prosperity of that, as of every other portion of our empire, subjects of the same sovereign, members of the same community, we submit ourselves with equal obedience to the same legislature, and we are entitled to receive from it the same protection: varied indeed in form, and adapting itself in its regulations to the differences of local situation and moral character; but directed always with an impartial hand to the same common object, that of promoting the strength and greatness of the whole by carrying to the utmost practicable height the prosperity of every part.

To our own merchants an open competition is sufficient. They ask no more. To this, and not to any exclusive privilege, the king's ministers have recognized their just pretensions. But still more powerful is the appeal which reason and nature urge to us, in behalf of the people of India. Irresistible indeed is their claim to a free trade limited by no corporate rights, no national monopoly: a free trade not merely with their fellow subjects in Europe, but also with every friendly nation throughout the habitable globe. It is the glory of our ancestors, that in the first moments of recovered freedom, in the hour when commerce and legislation were but as yet beginning to dawn on Europe, they recognized the rights of commercial interchange between mankind, proclaimed to foreign nations a secure and unmolested intercourse with the ports and markets of our country, and sanctified this just and beneficent principle to all succeeding times by incorporating it into the great charter of their own liberties. By what different rule shall we, their descendants, in this more liberal and enlightened age, with morals humanized by knowledge, and benevolence animated by purer religion, administer the interests of this vast empire, which the unsearchable decrees of Providence have subjected to our dominion? Provinces whose industry, and arts, and commerce are far more antient than our own! Kingdoms which by the free exercise of these their natural advantages had already risen

to opulence and refinement, while we were yet sunk in barbarism !

Never therefore shall I regret, never shall I remember but with heartfelt satisfaction, that my name is subscribed to that treaty which opened to our East Indian territories the commerce of America. I adopted the measure on the deliberate conviction of my own judgment, and with the full concurrence of the person * to whose immediate superintendence the public interests in India were then committed : nor did he, I am certain, omit to communicate upon it with those who had then the principal direction of the Company's affairs. But I rest on no participation of councils ; submitting myself willingly to the whole responsibility of that decision ; and were the happy moment now arrived when peace shall be restored between two nations not more closely united in origin than interest, I should be found an earnest advocate for re-establishing the commerce of America with India.

But if we admit these principles we must act upon them to their just extent. If we are really desirous of imparting to that valuable portion of our empire the benefit of universal commerce, or even if with a narrower purpose, and more limited views of public policy, we seek only to open to our own merchants the advantage of a trade with India, we must establish it on equal competition. This is its na-

* Lord Melville.

tural foundation, on this alone can it stand secure. Of the effects which the present system appears to me too likely to produce on the internal prosperity of our provinces, I have already spoken; very imperfectly indeed, and much more with the view of suggesting matter for future consideration than of entering at this time into the numerous topics of so large and interesting an enquiry. But for the full examination of this great question it will be necessary that we should also consider in what manner the continuance of that system would probably affect the transactions of the British merchant: Lest in the very moment in which we recognize his rights we should substantially defeat them, and with the purpose of conferring new benefits upon him, find in the result that we have only deluded him to his ruin. The extent to which the Americans had carried on their trade in India before they were at war with us, is the example to which the mercantile interests in England look with the greatest confidence. It has been ascribed by the Company to the peculiar privileges which that people enjoyed as neutrals; their opponents attribute it to the general advantages of private over corporate management. Both causes doubtless contributed to produce it. But the first has already ceased; and were it revived, it could be temporary only, nor could it in any case apply to the British merchant. Will, then, the latter be sufficient, on the return of peace, to protect his private trade against the operation of the

present system. I greatly doubt it. I will not dwell on the unequal footing on which the parties will meet in India: the agents of individuals in competition with the servants of the sovereign, and this in transactions with a people by whom, as my noble friend has emphatically told us, the intimation of a wish from a superior is always received as a command. I will suppose in the Company itself, I will suppose in all its agents, even the most distant from the seat of power, a forbearance almost miraculous, a perpetual self-command, subduing all the ordinary feelings and passions of mankind. Habit, interest, jealousy, the love of power, the desire of recommending themselves to their superiors, and the wish to assert their own consequence over importunate rivals; let all these be kept in perpetual subjection. In dealing with the natives, even with the weavers, whose labour the public treasury now engrosses by anticipated payments, I will suppose that the private trader finds himself henceforth completely on a level with the Company. Is he so in the nature of his adventure? The Company now trades to loss in India; the future proportion of that loss cannot even be conjectured by the merchant who is to maintain a competition with it. It depends on no commercial principle. Equally foreign to his speculations and inapplicable to his concerns are the resources which supply this losing trade, the necessity which compels it, and the advantages by which it is supposed to be com-

pensated. To the Company, the profits of the China trade will more than cover the deficiency; but from that trade you shut out the merchant. His trade with India will be a trade of barter, for profit on his own commercial capital; the Company's a trade of remittance; to be supplied from the surplus revenue of the state, aided (as it has already been in failure of that surplus) by the public credit of the sovereign of India, and that again upheld by the public credit of the British legislature. To the merchant a profit is indispensable, to the Company's treasury in England we might almost call the loss itself a source of profit; if it defeats the speculations of their rivals, and enables them by the sacrifice of ten per cent. on the remittance of revenue, or of loan, to realize ninety. In the merchant's hands a losing trade must stop; in the Company's, it produces as we see no abandonment, not even a suspension of the concern. For twenty years this losing trade has been unremittingly pursued; for twenty years longer it will most probably continue if these resolutions are adopted. This is the very principle on which they rest. The political expenses of the Indian government, if blended with the commerce of the Company, must through its commerce be discharged: the revenues of the state in India, if appropriated there to the purchase of investment, must by the sale of investment be realized at home: to meet the payments already engaged for, the goods must be sold, if not at profit then at loss;

if not at the present rate of loss, then at whatever increased proportion of deficiency may enable the Company to defeat the competition of their rivals, and to prove to future parliaments that the experiment of a free trade with India has been found impracticable !

It is true, that under the operation of this system, and with much superadded difficulty from restraints imposed by the Company, a large private trade has been carried on through their intervention from India by British subjects. A pleasing proof, no doubt, of the incompressible force of commerce wherever the natural power of demand is suffered to operate, even under the most harassing restrictions. But little argument can be drawn from this experience to justify the expectation of success to separate and unconnected British adventure. It must be considered that this trade also has been a commerce of remittance ; carried on not from profit on British capital embarked in a traffic of mutual return, but to supply to the public servants in India the necessary means of bringing home their fortunes.

Let it also be remembered, that this principle of loss is not confined to the sale of goods received from India. It pervades both branches of the Company's Indian trade. Their losses on export from this country are not even disguised ; their advocates proclaim the fact, and boast of it. So habituated are we in considering the complicated relations of this great Company to

confound all principles of government and policy, that this annual waste of the property with which they are entrusted is actually urged on their behalf as a sacrifice which they make to the national interests, and as a claim upon the gratitude of parliament. Yet, if loss is incurred in this case, by whom is it sustained? Not by the directors themselves, that would be wholly unreasonable; not by the proprietors of India stock; they receive, and must receive, their undiminished dividends: the loss falls on the public treasury—on the people of England, whose participation of Indian revenue must be still farther postponed by every fresh embarrassment in the Company's affairs; and whose representatives are called upon year after year to supply in loans, in forbearances, and in facilities of public credit, the deficiencies of this uncommercial system.

But let us admit, if it be necessary, the merit of this proceeding; its effects will still remain the same. If, in fact, the export of British manufactures is now carried on to loss, with what hope of advantage can we invite our merchants to participate in it? To them it can be rendered profitable only by bringing back to just commercial principles the commercial transactions of that great body with which they must maintain a competition. Let this be done, and the result will not be doubtful. Let the vigilance of self-interest, let the skill and enterprize of private traders be fairly opposed to the routine of

corporate management, and in that contest we know beforehand which side will triumph. Remove the restraint of law, deliver us from the competition of the public purse, and the British merchant will make his own cause good.

To what extent his trade may then be carried, presumptuous indeed would be the man who shall now venture to pronounce. On what evidence, what conjecture, would he found his judgment? What present knowledge, what past experience of India could possibly decide that question? No commerce, Trebatius or Quintus Cicero returning from a campaign in Britain would probably have informed the Roman senate, no commerce can ever be carried on with that uncivilized, uncultivated island, divided absolutely from the whole world by tempestuous and unnavigable seas, and inhabited only by naked and houseless barbarians. No commerce, some sage counsellor of Henry or Elizabeth might with equal authority have assured those monarchs, can ever be opened with the dreary wilderness of North America, a land covered with impenetrable forests, the shelter only of some wandering tribes of the rudest and most ferocious savages. Yet of these predictions the folly might be palliated by inexperience. In the defect of better knowledge such conjectures might even pass for wisdom. But what shall we say of those who deny the possibility not of opening new sources for the commerce of mankind, but of enlarging its present channels?

Who tell us that the trade which we now carry on with India must in all future time be limited to its actual amount? Strange and unprecedented necessity! which has thus set bounds to human industry and enterprize, arrested the progress of commercial intercourse, and by some blasting and malignant influence blighted the natural increase of social improvement! With full and confident assurance may we repel these idle apprehensions. By commerce, commerce will increase, and industry by industry. So it has ever happened, and the great Creator of the world has not exempted India from this common law of our nature. The supply, first following the demand, will soon extend it. By new facilities new wants and new desires will be produced. And neither climate nor religion, nor long established habits, no, nor even poverty itself, the greatest of all present obstacles, will ultimately refuse the benefits of such an intercourse to the native population of that empire. They will derive from the extension of commerce, as every other people has uniformly derived from it, new comforts and new conveniences of life, new incitements to industry, and new enjoyments in just reward of increased activity and enterprize.

But it is a very narrow view of this question to confine it to the direct trade of India with Great Britain, or even to the whole commerce, British and foreign, of that vast empire. Other objects of still larger scope, other benefits of still

more extended operation, are necessarily included in this decision. The first which presents itself, is the trade with China. This it is proposed again to place in the exclusive possession of the Company. Such a determination I should deeply lament, as inconsistent, in my judgment, both with the principle on which the trade to India is opened, and also with the fair enjoyment of that concession. It is only by the China trade that the Company now profits. Shall we, then, invite our merchants and manufacturers to participate in loss, to struggle against unproductive purchase and depreciated sale, but where the just gains of commerce present themselves shall we there raise new barriers against their industry? Shall we admit them to the commerce of our own dominions, because foreigners must also trade there, and shall we, in the same breath, refuse to them the liberty of trading to a foreign country? And on what footing will this refusal place them in respect even of the Indian trade? Is it meant to close against them all liberty of trading with China? To foreigners that liberty cannot be refused. Is it intended only to prohibit them from bringing China goods from thence to England? That privilege the Company is to monopolize. How then can they maintain a competition in India, either with the Company or with foreigners, by both of whom superior advantages are enjoyed? Let us represent to ourselves two traders in India, carrying on their rival business;—not as in this case, the

sovereign in competition with those who reside under his government, a mighty corporation against an unaided individual, the public exchequer against the funds of private trade,—let us suppose them both British merchants, in all other respects on a footing of complete equality, except that the one is limited to make all his returns direct to Europe, while to the other you give the option of a circuitous trade through China. Could it be doubtful on which side the balance would preponderate? Especially after what my noble friend has told us of the great amount and profitable nature of the present trade of our Indian territories with that country.

But were it desirable to exclude the whole body of our merchants from all share in the trade with China, how could this regulation be executed? Its object is understood to be the security of our own revenue. No man, I am sure, is less disposed than I am to interfere with that essential object. Could I be satisfied, that the safety of the public revenue does really require this sacrifice, great as it is, I should still say it must be made. But were it so, I repeat it, how then could the provision be enforced? The trade of the British merchant with the eastern islands we know must be free. This admits of no doubt: to a monopoly in that quarter, the Company could scarcely urge even the insufficient claim of past possession. Let us then suppose the private trader admitted there to free

navigation and commerce, but excluded by these resolutions from direct access to China. What follows? Every article of the commerce of China which he wishes to procure, its cottons, its silk, its tea, will be brought to him in country vessels to whatever port he chuses of the Eastern Archipelago. Against this danger, as some would call it, against this great advantage as I consider it, what precaution would the spirit of monopoly devise? Shall we meet it with the revenue system by which the British coasts are guarded? Can we establish along the whole extent of Java and Sumatra, and Malacca, our entries and clearances, our bonds and certificates and dockets, as in the port of London? Can we build British custom-houses in all that vast chain of countless islands which encircles the seas of China, placed there as if in mockery of such a vain imagination, and stretching in uninterrupted continuance from Ava almost to New Holland, and thence again northward by Borneo and the Philippines to the very boundaries of the Russian empire? It would be to consider such a project too seriously to remind your lordships, that the whole army of revenue officers now employed throughout the British empire, with all their expence, and patronage, and influence, would not suffice to execute the smallest part of such a provision, which, if it fails even in a single instance, is defeated in the whole; where, if any one channel of escape remains unclosed, the whole dyke, with all its dif-

ficulty, and cost, and labour, becomes only an useless burden to the earth.

To Europe therefore, not indeed by lawful trade, but in despite of all your prohibitions, and by that very contraband, if contraband it could be called, against which your exclusion is directed, every article of China produce and manufacture will easily be brought. But you may at least prohibit your own merchants from bringing them into the British ports. You may so. And whenever peace is restored to Europe, the consequence will be the same as the same prohibition has before produced. Ostend, Calais, Boulogne, the whole coast of the narrow seas, will again be lined with depôts of tea for smuggling, of tea brought there by British trade from the eastern islands, or by foreign trade direct from China.

For in truth, my lords, not only is the provision impracticable, the object itself is hopeless. Our past experience teaches us with unerring certainty, that in peace the revenue which we raise on tea cannot at its present rate of duty be collected. In 1785, the Company's monopoly was in full vigour; and the revenue had the whole unqualified benefit of every security which that system could provide. No British vessel could, at that time, without the express permission of the Company, enter into the seas of India, or of China, into the Ethiopic, or the Pacific Ocean; yet parliament was even then compelled to reduce the duty, and we commuted it for a burdensome tax on our own houses.

How much greater will now be the difficulty of collecting this revenue, after you shall have opened to British vessels, as even these resolutions purport, all the ports of the East except those of China alone.

The rate of duty must, therefore, again be diminished whenever peace returns. No man questions it. But it is of great importance to remark, that the necessary amount of this reduction will very much depend on the system by which the trade is carried on. Beyond a certain standard, the price of this commodity cannot be raised. If you exceed it, the advantage which you give to contraband, destroys the lawful trade, and undermines the revenue. Of that price, the prime cost forms comparatively a small part, the commercial charges and the duty constitute the remainder. In proportion, therefore, as the one is augmented, the other must be reduced. Import cheaper, and you may levy a higher tax; increase the cost at which you receive the commodity, and you can add less to it in the form of duty. And if it be true in this case, as in every other, that a trade of monopoly will be carried on less œconomically than a trade of competition, the conclusion is irresistible. The reduction of duty must be greater, and the defalcation of revenue must be made good, as it was before, by other and more burdensome taxation.

But in speaking, however imperfectly, of these various branches of this extensive question, I have as yet not even touched upon that point

which is in my view by far the greatest object of advantage to this country, in opening to the British merchant that vast tract of land and ocean, from which he has been hitherto shut out by the Company's exclusive Charter. To anticipate with too much confidence the course of any commerce as yet untried, is not less hazardous in political than in mercantile speculation. But if there ever were two countries apparently destined and formed by nature for commercial intercourse, those countries are the southern provinces of Asia, and the western shores of South America. The precious metals in which the one abounds, have always, from the remotest antiquity down even to the present hour, been the staple article of import into the other; the produce and the manufactures of which are again peculiarly suited to the consumption of climates so congenial to their own.

In the present circumstances of the world, who does not see that this copious, this inexhaustible source of trading, enterprize, and profit, must, unless you prohibit it, be available principally to your own people? British legislation can alone refuse this great advantage to British commerce. To your merchants it would be invaluable. And if in the consumption of South America the industry of the British manufacturer should establish, as we may justly hope, no unsuccessful competition even with that of his fellow subjects in Bengal, how much would

the direct intercourse of that continent with India facilitate to him also the returns of such a trade.

Those who understand as your lordships do, the real nature of commerce, and the true principles of its wise administration, well know that all its interests are interwoven, all its branches inseparably connected. It is the union, not of commerce with government, but of commerce with commerce, that a provident legislature will respect. Numerous are the commercial enterprizes which would be of small benefit if limited to the direct intercourse of one country with another, but which by intermediate or subsequent transactions in other markets, and in distant regions, become highly advantageous both to private and to national interests. It is in this view that I feel an undescribable anxiety to secure to our merchants their full participation, not of parts and portions only, but of the whole of the commerce of the East. I wish to grant and guarantee to them not that alone, of which, with my limited views and imperfect knowledge, I can already discern, and define the immediate, and infallible benefit, but that also which shall be the ulterior and unforeseen effect, the natural though unpremeditated conquest of their own skill and enterprize following up their advantages with ardour, and deriving from every successful operation both the spirit and the means of new exertion.

For the encouragement of such hopes no ma-

ment was ever yet more favourable. The barrier of prejudice is shaken ; the spirit of monopoly is rapidly giving way to juster principles of commercial legislation ; and the change of public opinion in this country is seconded by the great revolutions of the world. Why should we then delay to grant to the British merchant all for which he now contends ; all that the exclusive Charter of the East India Company has hitherto closed against him ; all and more than all that these resolutions propose to open to the people of this empire ? A free trade with India, a free trade with China ; with the eastern islands, the latest acquisition of British valour ; and through them with the rich kingdoms of South America ; a country hitherto indeed barred against us as much by the monopolies of its parent government as by our own, but now at last by the course of events no longer within the controul of man, opened, in every case I trust infallibly opened, to the commerce of the world.

What a scene does this present to our imagination ! We are told that when the Spanish discoverers first overcame, with labour and peril almost unspeakable, the mighty range of mountains which divides the Western from the Atlantic shores of South America, they stood fixed in silent admiration, gazing on the vast expanse of the Southern Ocean, which lay stretched before them in boundless prospect. They adored, even those hardened and sanguinary adventurers adored, the gracious Providence of Heaven,

which, after the lapse of so many centuries, had opened to mankind so wonderful a field of untried and unimagined enterprize. They anticipated in prophetic enthusiasm the glory of their native country, the future extent of its sovereignty and power, and the noble prize presented to its ambition. But theirs was the glory of conquest, the ambition of war, the prize of unjust dominion. As vast as theirs, but infinitely more honourable, far higher both in purpose and in recompense, are the hopes with which the same prospect now elevates our hearts. Over countries yet unknown to science, and in tracts which British navigation has scarcely yet explored, we hope to carry the tranquil arts, the social enjoyments, the friendly and benevolent intercourse of commerce. By the link of mutual interest, by the bond of reciprocal good will, we hope to connect together the remotest regions of the earth; humble, and weak, but not rejected instruments of that great purpose of our Creator, by which He has laid, in the reciprocal necessities both of individuals and of nations, the firmest ground-work of all human society. Let this be our glory, and what conqueror will not have reason to envy it?

And here, my lords, I might properly close this statement, already extended far beyond my wish. But I would not wholly pass over one or two other points which I think of great importance, though they do not, perhaps, relate so much to the general questions which we have

this night discussed, as to separate arrangements which might be adopted under any form of Indian government. I shall speak of them very briefly. Some of them must probably, in the progress of this business, be again brought under our view.

The most considerable among the benefits which my noble friend enumerated as having been conferred by the British government on the natives of India, was that arrangement which is technically called the permanent settlement. Your lordships are well aware that this consisted in fixing the amount of territorial revenue, to be annually collected from the landholders of our provinces, instead of leaving it to be varied from year to year at the discretion of government, on the reports of its officers, and according to the supposed ability of the person assessed. This certainty of taxation, which would be so important in every country, was of the utmost possible value in provinces where so much the largest part of the public revenue is raised from the proprietors of the soil: bearing a proportion to its produce, which has been differently estimated by persons the best informed, but which even by the lowest calculation is of frightful amount. The measure was first adopted in the Bengal provinces, and it has since been extended to some other parts of our possessions in India. To enlarge upon its advantages before a British audience, would seem superfluous. Until very lately I thought they had been generally ad-

mitted ; but the late report of a committee of the house of commons has filled me with anxiety on this subject. That report treats of the question of applying the same beneficial principle to the more recent acquisitions by which our territory in India has been so largely extended ; and no man, I fear, can read what is there said without perceiving its tendency, if not to discredit the original measure, at least to discountenance its proposed extension. My noble friend *, agreeing with me in principle, but not fully partaking of my alarm, has nevertheless himself described the expressions of this paper as ambiguous. Be it so. I will only then remark, that in former times, the reports of parliament were not expressed with ambiguity when they enforced the duties of protection and justice towards our native subjects. I would, if it were possible, most willingly persuade myself, that not the language of this report alone, but also the language of the public dispatches which it quotes, is really ambiguous. To my understanding they too plainly speak their purpose. But most sincerely shall I rejoice in the assurance that my apprehensions are ill founded. If they are so, it is of easy proof. No one can then object to the proposal which I shall hereafter submit to your lordships ; a proposal to obtain from parliament, in the law which we are now to pass, the same interposition, couched in the same terms, and

* Marquis Wellesley.

directed to the same object, which in the act of 1784 has proved so eminently beneficial. To remind us that so important a measure as this cannot be duly executed but after some previous deliberation and enquiry, and on such information as is really necessary to enable our Indian government to do justice to those for whose benefit it is intended, is only to say of this what is equally true of every other momentous and extensive arrangement. I wish it to be so proceeded in. But it is now, I think, between seven and eight years since peace was restored to India. A considerably longer term has elapsed since the acquisition of some of the provinces in question. The settlement itself, whenever it shall be made, will probably be established in the first instance, as was done by lord Cornwallis, in Bengal, for ten years only, to be then made permanent after an experience of its effects. And if it be not yet time to begin upon such a work, when is it to be concluded? To obtain theoretic perfection in these arrangements is manifestly impossible. It was the opinion of lord Cornwallis, a sentiment I think not less wise than humane, that less evil was to be feared from the partial errors of such a measure than from its delay. And such, I am persuaded, is the experience of the fact.

But my present object is only to declare the principle, such as it was declared in 1784; to place, by our new law, the future government of India, be it what it may, under the same injunc-

tion which was imposed by the former act on the king's commissioners; and to apply to the ceded and conquered provinces the same benevolent interposition which parliament before applied to the provinces then under our dominion. Above all, it is my wish, by this solemn and authoritative declaration, renewed after the experience of so many years, to prove to our native subjects the permanency of our principles of right, and to impress them with the unalterable conviction, that a British legislature estimates the security of their property, far above the possible increase of its own revenue.

For the state of our military service in India, some new provision must also, I think, be made by parliament, in every event. What I have already said on that subject, was applied to the supposed separation of the government and commerce of India. But if the ostensible authority in that country be continued on its present footing, I admit that the army cannot be disconnected from it. The military power is in every state inseparable from the civil; united, they support each other—divided, they cannot exist together. In India our situation peculiarly requires their union; it is already too weak; increase the separation, and you destroy your government. Your fate will probably, in that case, too soon resemble that of so many of the native princes, whose loss of sovereignty has followed so fast on their renunciation of military power.

But it is for this very reason that parliament

ought not, at least if my impressions are correct, to leave that matter in its present situation ; one of much acknowledged and experienced danger. For my own part, I freely confess, that I know no other remedy against that danger, except by the proposal which I have already submitted to your lordships ; openly to establish the king's authority, both civil and military, over that as over every other part of his dominions ; but with such strict and scrupulous limitation of patronage as we know by experience, or may conclude by reason, to be effectual against abuse. And I regard the difficulty of settling the military establishment of India on any other secure or satisfactory footing, as a most powerful recommendation of that arrangement, I might rather say, as a decisive argument, for its adoption.

But if this be not done, it is for those who oppose it to consider of other securities. You cannot here say, as my noble friend has said on other parts of the subject, that the actual enjoyment of a state of undisturbed and fearless security may justify you in leaving all things exactly on their present footing. If this be a good argument in one case, the opposite conclusion must equally result from contrary premises. Our task, in this branch of our deliberation, is, indeed, one of the most difficult of all that belong to government and legislation. We have to uphold the discipline, obedience, and military character of an army, no longer called into frequent action to subdue our foreign enemies, (for

what foreign enemy can now meet us in the field in India?) but employed almost exclusively to support the civil institutions of our sovereignty. It is by war, as your lordships well know, that the character of armies is formed; by war it is maintained. Labour and peril are the stern guardians of all the military virtues; security and repose are their corruptors. Great as are, in every other view, the blessings of peace, yet peace is the true period of danger to a government; which, instead of striking deep roots into the affections and habits of its people, has chosen rather to separate itself from the soil in which it has been planted, and to rest all on the adventitious support of an armed force.

I am trespassing too long upon your lordships' indulgence: I will therefore not touch, even summarily, upon some other considerations, of which I should have wished to speak. I will say nothing of the inconsistency of committing so large a part of our Asiatic empire to the management of a trading company, while we leave the remainder to be administered under the authority of the crown; thus breaking down the union and subordination even of the civil power, and establishing on distinct and opposite principles the foundations of your government, in provinces so distant from the metropolis. Nor will I enter into the defects of your judicial system in those provinces, or into the present state of their internal legislation and police, providing (as it too plainly appears from the reports

upon our table) in no adequate manner for the personal protection and security of your people. Neither will I discuss the question of taxation. Though I trust in the ultimate conclusion of our measure, it cannot happen that this power should in any part of the British empire be left to the discretion of the executive government, to be exercised without the authority, without even the knowledge of parliament, and to extend over the whole property and dealings, both of your native subjects, and even of British merchants resorting to that country.

But on one point more I must still detain you for a few moments. My noble friend to whose arguments I have on this occasion so often alluded, among the many other brilliant and important services which he rendered to his country in India, has the peculiar merit of having first called the attention of the public to the education of the young men who go out there in the civil service of the Company. He proposed, and actually carried into execution, an extensive and well digested plan for this necessary object. He has adverted to it this night, and the minute in which he described and recommended that measure is, I believe, among the papers for which he has moved. Those of your lordships to whom it is new, will read it, I am certain, with the highest admiration; in those to whom the subject is in some degree familiar, that feeling will not be unmixed with regret, in recollecting the reception which this measure experienced in

England. The Company which has afforded in twenty years to lose millions on its commerce—the Company which collects in India, under different forms, above fifteen millions of annual revenue, could not stand, it was said, against the expense of this establishment. Public œconomy is no doubt, at all times, a virtue. The well ordered disposition, the just apportionment, of the expences, the burthens, and the resources of a state, is the surest foundation of its prosperity and power. But directly opposed to that manly and honourable virtue, and connected most frequently with the principle and practice of profusion in other cases, is that parsimony which interferes with the first duties of the government towards the community whose interests it administers. No obligation (I submit it to the judgment of your lordships) no obligation could, in my opinion, be more binding on the British sovereign of India, than that which my noble friend had thus discharged; no application of the public revenues of those provinces could have a juster claim to be held inviolable and sacred than that which was allotted to the purposes of this institution. What better service could be rendered to that country, or to our own, than to train up to knowledge and virtue those men who in a few years are to be entrusted with the highest interests, not of the Company only, but also of the public? those men who are to exhibit the British character to India; to preside in its tribunals, to collect its revenue, to

watch over its tranquillity and good government, and, in one word, to administer to the happiness of millions of its inhabitants. The king's commissioners forbore to interpose for the protection of this admirable institution. Why they did so I know not, and I greatly lament it. The plan was therefore limited and mutilated; and it exists now only as a wreck of its first noble design.

The deficiency was, however, acknowledged; and a separate college has been established in England for the education of the young men destined for India.

If I speak of this plan, as I think of it, with strong disapprobation and regret, let it not be inferred, that I object to any degree of attention which can be given even to the earliest instruction and discipline of those who are destined for Indian service. Far from it. No man will more rejoice in this than I shall—no man more zealously contend for its advantage. But I can never persuade myself that it was justifiable to form for that purpose a separate establishment in England. It may be doubted at what age these youths may most advantageously be sent to India. But up to the latest moment of their continuance in this country, be that period what it may, I see the strongest possible reasons against their being separated in education from the young men of their own age and station in life. Instead of forming them beforehand into an exclusive class, into something resembling a

distinct cast of men, destined to administer government in remote provinces, they ought above all other public servants to receive, so long as they continue in England, an education purely English. Instead of rejecting, we should, I think, have embraced with eagerness the advantage which our great schools and universities would have afforded to them for this purpose: that they might learn there, I trust with not less facility than elsewhere, the elements of whatever sciences you could wish them to possess: that in addition to these they might find there, and there only could they find, that best of all education to a public man which forms the mind to manly exertion and honourable feeling, the education which young men receive from each other in the numerous and mixed society of their equals, collected from various classes of our community, and destined to various ways of life: that they might there be imbued with the deepest tincture of English manners, and English attachments, of English principles, and I am not afraid in this case to say also English prejudices: and that they might carry out with them from thence to India remembrances and affections, not local only but personal; recollections not merely of the scenes but of the individuals endeared to them by early habit; mixed with the indelible impression of those high sentiments and virtuous principles which, I am happy to think it, float in the very atmosphere of our public places of education, and contri-

bute much more, I think, than is commonly supposed, to all on which we most value ourselves in our national character.

I have now finished what I had to submit to your lordships in this discussion. I am well aware how much remains behind: how many are the topics, how large and interesting the questions which I have left wholly untouched. Vain indeed would have been the endeavour in the compass of a single speech, on an incidental motion, to place under your view even in the faintest sketch, all the objects that must engage your attention in the course of this vast enquiry. Other questions more deeply interesting to our own domestic concerns, affecting more nearly the prosperity or the safety of these islands, may have occupied the deliberations of parliament: one of such large and almost boundless extent has certainly never yet been brought before us. For my share in the discharge of this awful duty I have endeavoured to qualify myself by study and reflection: imperfect as my notions certainly are, erroneous as they may too probably be, they are at least not brought before your lordships without long, diligent, and repeated consideration. That there are many to whom my opinions will not be acceptable I well know. But even they I think must be convinced that one only motive can by possibility exist for the part which I have taken on this most important question; a strong and irresistible impulse of public duty. To shock the

prejudices, to oppose, as it will be thought, the interests, of many individuals whom I personally respect, and of public bodies of the greatest weight, authority, and influence in the community to which I belong, cannot be a pleasing task. But these, and every other consideration, must at once give way, when the question on which I was called upon to speak, and on which I have now ventured to submit to you my present thoughts, was nothing less than this, By what political, by what commercial institutions can the British parliament best provide for the happiness of the people of India?

Grenville, William W.

The speech of Lord Grenville, on the Marquis Wellesley's motion in the House of Lords, on friday, the 9th of April, 1813, for the production of certain papers on Indian affairs

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